

A Choice

Penny-worth of W I T. Or,

A clear Distinction between a virtuous W I F E and a wanton Harlot.

In Three P A R T S.

HERE is a pennyworth of Wit,
For those that ever went astray;
If warning they will take by it,
I will do them good another Day.
It is a Touch-Stone of true Love,
Betwixt a Harlot and a Wife;
The former does destructive prove,
The latter yields a Joy to Life.
As in this Song you may behold,
Set forth by William Lane,
A wealthy Merchant, brave and bold,
Who did a Harlot long maintain.
Altho' a virtuous Wife he had;
Likewise a youthful Daughter dear,
Which might have made his Heart full glad,
Yet them he seldom would come near.
The Traffick which he traded for,
On the tempestuous Ocean wide,
His Harlot all he brought to her,
But nothing to his virtuous Bride.
The finest Silks that could be bought,
Nay, Jewels Rubies, Di'mond Rings,
He to his wanton Harlot brought,
With many other costly Things.
She still receiv'd him with a Smile,
When he came from the raging Sea,
And said, with Words as sweet as Oil,
My dearest, come and take thy Ease.
To my soft Bed and Linnen fine,
Thou art right welcome, Love, said she;
Both I and all that e'er is mine,
Shall still at thy Devotion be.
He brought two hundred Pound in Gold,
And after that three hundred more;
With Chains and Jewels manifold,
And bid her lay them up in Store.
Ay, that I will, thou needst not fear,
And so embrac'd him with a Kiss;
Then took the Wealth, and said, my Dear,
I'll have a special Care of this.
Then did they banquet many Days,
Feasting on delicious Fare;
Thus by her false deluding Way,
She drew him into a fatal Snare.
When he had liv'd some time on shore,
He must go to the Seas again;
With Traffick to encrease his Store,
The wanton Harlot to maintain.
To whom he said, my Joy and Dear,
With me what Venture will you send,
A good Return you need not fear,
I'll be thy Factor and thy Friend;

In Goods, my Dear, I'll lend above
Ten Pounds, which you shall take aboard;
I know that, unto me, my Dear,
A treble Gain it will afford.
This said, next to his Wife he goes,
And ask'd her in a scornful wife,
What venture she would then propose,
To send with him for Merchandize.
I'll send a Penny, Love, by thee,
Be sure take a great Care of it;
When you are in Foreign Parts, said she,
Pray buy a Pennyworth of Wit.
She laid the Penny in his Hand,
And said, I pray you don't forget;
When you are in another Land;
Pray buy a Pennyworth of Wit.
He put the Penny up secure;
And said, I'll take a special Care,
To lay it out, you may be sure;
So to his Mistress he did repair.
And told her what he was to buy,
At which she laugh'd his Wife to Scorn;
On board he went immediately,
And went to Sea that very Morn.

P A R T II.

NOW they're gone with merry Hearts,
Merchant and his jovial Crew;
From Port to Port in Foreign Parts,
To Trade as they were wont to do.
At length, when he had well bestow'd,
The Cargo which was Outward bound,
He did his Trading Vessels load,
With richest Treasure which he found.
As he his Merchandize still sent;
They turn'd to Gems and Golden Oar;
Which crown'd his Labour with Content,
He never was so rich before.
The wanton Harlot's Venture then,
Did turn to great Account likewise;
For every Pound she should have Ten;
Such was this lucky Merchandize.
For Joy of this the Merchant cry'd;
One merry Bout my Lads shall have;
A splendid Supper I'll provide,
Of all the Dainties you can crave.
Before we set to Sea again;
This said, they to a Tavern went,
There they did drink and feast amain,
Till many Crowns and Pounds were spent.

The Merchant then with laughing mov'd,
Said he, for Wit I ne'er ha sought;
My Harlot's Venture is improv'd;
But of my Wife I never thought.
One single Penny, and no more,
She has a Venture sent by me;
I was to lay it out therefore,
In what you think a Rarity.
She bid me use my rarest Skill,
To buy a Pennyworth of Wit;
But I have kept this Penny still,
And ne'er so much as thought of it.
Where shall I go to lay it out,
True Wit is hard and scarce to find;
But come, my Lads, let's drink about,
My Wife's small Venture I'll not mind.
There is a Proverb often us'd;
Wit's never good, till bought full dear;
Wherefore, I may well be excus'd,
There is little for a Penny here.
An aged Father sitting by;
Whose venerable Locks were grey;
Strait made the Merchant this Reply;
Hear me a Word or two, I pray.
The Harlot in Prosperity,
She will embrace thee for thy Gold;
But when in want and Poverty;
You'll nought from her but Frowns behold.
And ready to betray thy Life,
When wretched poor and low;
But thy true hearted faithful Wife,
Will stand by thee in wealth or woe.
If thou wilt prove the Truth of this;
Strip off thy gaudy rich Array;
And so return to thy lowly Miss,
Declare that thou wast cast away.
Thy Riches buried in the Main,
Besides as thou pass'd through the wood;
One of your Servants you have slain;
For which your Life in Danger stood.
Beseech her for to shelter thee;
Declare on her you do depend,
And then, alas! full well you'll see,
How far she'll prove thy faithful Friend.
Then if she frowns, go to thy Wife,
Tell her this melancholy Theme;
Who labours most to save thy Life,
Let her be most in thy esteem.
Father, the Merchant then reply'd,
You must this single Penny take;
And when I have pass'd the Ocean wide,
A Proof of this I mean to make.

And loving Friends, for ought I know,
I may this single Penny Prize;
It may be the best I do bestow,
In all my wealthy Merchandize.
Taking his Leave, away he went,
And his brave Hearts of Gold:
To whom he said, I'll prove the same,
When I my Native Land behold.

P A R T III.

WITH full spread Sails to Sea they went,
Neptune the golden Cargo bore,
Thro' roaring waves, to their Content,
At length they reach'd the British Shore.
The Merchant put on poor array,
The very worst of ragged Cloaths;
And then without the least delay,
He to his wanton Harlot goes.
When she beheld him in distress,
She cry'd, what is the Matter now?
Said he, I'm poor and penniless,
With that he made a courteous Bow!
Crying, no Man was e'er so cross'd,
As I have been, Sweethearts delight,
My Ship and Cargoe all is lost,
Without thy Help I'm ruin'd quite.
My Loss is great, yet that's not all,
One of my Servants I have slain,
As we did both at variance fall,
Some Shelter let me hear obtain.
I dare not go anear my Wife,
Whom I have wrong'd for many Years;
Into thy Hands I put my Life,
Take pity on my melting Tears.
Ye bloody Villain, she reply'd,
Don't in the least on me depend;
Begone, or as I live, she cry'd,
I for an Officer will send.
I'll give you neither Bread nor Drink,
Nor any shelter shall you have;
Of nasty lousy Rags you stink,
Begone, you base pernicious Knave.
Don't think that I'll your Counsel keep,
Or harbour such a one as you,
He turn'd aside and seem'd to weep,
And bid the wanton Jilt adieu.
Then to his loving Wife he came,
Both poor and naked in distress;
He told her all the very same,
Yet she receiv'd him ne'er the less.
My Dear, she cry'd, since it is so,
Take Comfort in thy loving Wife,
All that I have shall freely go,
To gain a Pardon for thy Life.

I'll lodge thee in a Place secure;
Where I will daily nourish thee:
Believe me, Love, thou may'st be sure,
To find a faithful Friend in me.
When he this perfect Proof had made,
Which of the two did love him best,
Unto his virtuous Wife he said,
My Jewel set thy Heart at rest.
Believe, no Servant I have slain,
Nor have I suffer'd any Loss,
Enough I have us to maintain,
The Ocean Seas I'll no more cross.
My laden Ships lie near the Shore,
With Gold and Jewels richly fraught,
So much I never had before;
They Penny-worth of Wit I've bought.
Once more he to his Harlot goes,
With fourteen Sailors brave and bold,
All cloath'd in new and costly Cloaths,
Of Silks and rich embroider'd Gold.
This Miss when she the Pomp beheld,
Did offer him a kind Embrace;
But he with Wrath and Anger fill'd,
Did strait upbraid her to her Face.
But she with Smiles these words express'd,
My Dear, I've faithful Love for thee,
What e'er I said was but in Jest,
Why did'st thou go so soon away?
'Twas time to go, for as I'm told,
You have another Love in store,
Whom you have furnish'd with my Gold,
And Jewels which I brought on Shore.
'Tis false, she cry'd, I have them all;
With that the Merchant soon reply'd,
Lay them before me then I shall
Soon be convinc'd and satisfy'd.
Then up she run and fetch'd them down,
His Jewels, Gold, and Rubies bright;
He seiz'd them all, then with a Frown,
He bid the wanton Jilt good Night.
When he had took the golden Purse,
And swept up every precious Stone;
She cry'd, what will you rob me thus?
Yes, that I will, of what's my own.
You wanted to betray my Life,
But thanks to God there's no such fear;
These Jewels shall adorn my Wife,
Henceforth thy House I'll ne'er come near.
Home he return'd to his sweet Wife,
And told her all that he had done;
E'er since they liv'd a happy Life,
And he'll no more to Harlots run.
Thus he the wanton Harlot bit,
Who long had his Destruction sought:
This is a Penny-worth of wit,
The best that ever Merchant bought.

N O R T H A M P T O N :

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